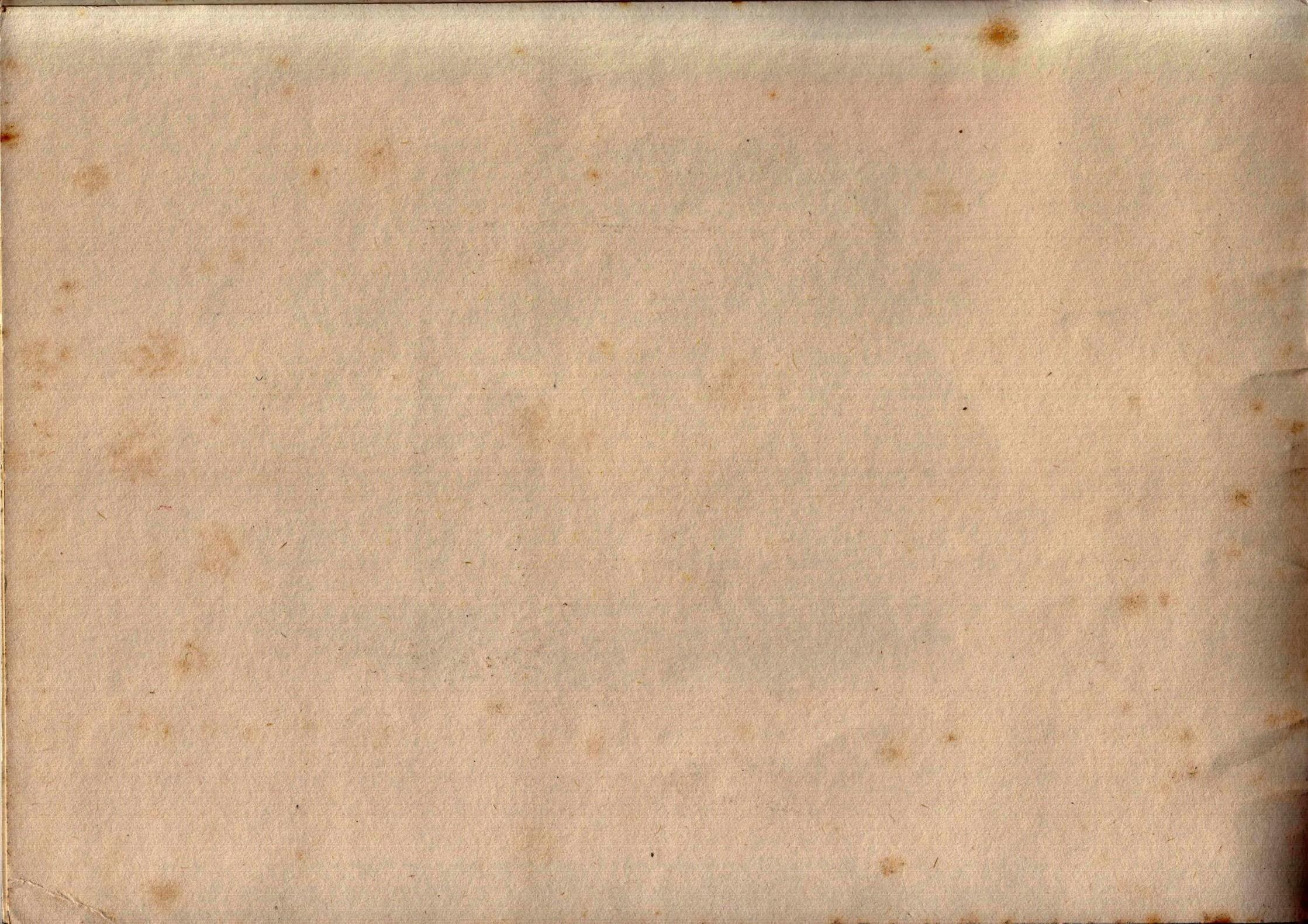


•1933 - BEXHILL HOSPITAL - 1983•



50 YEARS OF CARING

A LEAGUE OF FRIENDS  
GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR TRIBUTE

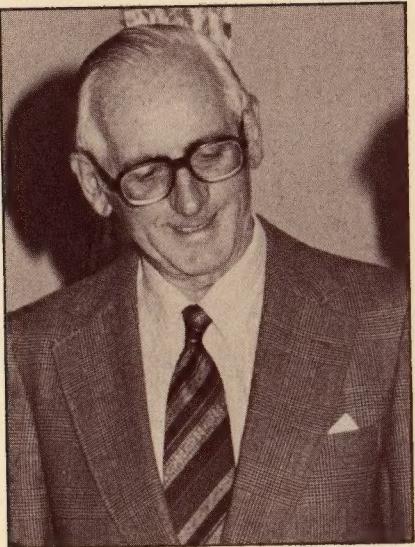


THE LEAGUE OF FRIENDS OF BEXHILL HOSPITAL.



THE HOSPITAL A TOWN BUILT

Dedicated to the people of Bexhill who by  
their efforts built Bexhill Hospital and who by their support  
have sustained it for 50 years



## Bexhill hospital

The year 1983 marks the Golden Jubilee of Bexhill Hospital which was opened amid general celebrations on May 13, 1933.

It was due to the energy and enthusiasm of leading citizens and the support of the people of the town that the project was financed and completed without recourse to public funds and with no outstanding debt – a source of pride and satisfaction to all those who had fostered and supported the idea that Bexhill should have its own general hospital.

Since its inception the hospital's facilities have been greatly extended with busy out-patients', physiotherapy and X-ray departments; and a nurses' home was built.

There have been other changes over the years, the most significant being the incorporation of the hospital into the National Health Service.

While in some respects advantages have accrued, such as the provision of a purpose-built unit in the grounds to meet the needs of the elderly, there was great concern and dismay at the closing of the casualty department, which was regarded by many as a retrograde step and a serious reduction in the services provided to the public.

In 1952 the League of Friends of Bexhill Hospital was formed to provide improvements and amenities for patients and staff and with 2,000 members its activities have now developed to such an extent that it has been able to promote major schemes of improvement.

For example, all the main wards of the hospital were recently improved and up-graded at a cost to the League of £75,000 and a further £60,000 has been set aside to finance a scheme for improving the outpatients' department, currently being prepared by the Hastings Health Authority staff.

In addition the League has provided improved medical equipment on a considerable scale, including an ultra-sound scanner costing £19,193.

This brochure has been produced by the League of Friends to mark the hospital's golden jubilee.

In commending it to you we would direct your attention to the programme of events on page 11. In future years the League aims, in co-operation with the health authority, to develop further its activities on behalf of our local hospital and for this purpose we shall continue to rely upon the generous and loyal support of the people of Bexhill.

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "John French".

John French  
Chairman

# How it began

The handsome building gracing Holliers Hill is literally the hospital Bexhill built for itself.

After 50 years of unbroken service to the community that created it, the building is a working symbol of the enterprise and resolute faith of a town that had been determined to create a hospital of its own and, down the changes of the years, to maintain it.

In retrospect it seems inconceivable that when the need for a town hospital was first expressed there were those who opposed it.

The hospital opened on May 13, 1933. Before then Bexhillians and people from the surrounding area were dependent on the hospitals of Hastings for their medical care.

In an age when cars were for the wealthy few it was a bleak outlook.

Older Bexhillians recall tonsil operations performed in the surgeries of family doctors in the town; of bumping back from treatment at the Royal East Sussex Hospital, Hastings on the wooden seats of open-topped trams.

Relatives and friends had to dig deep into their pockets to make the ten mile return journey regularly.

Concern for the welfare of both patients and relatives prompted a popular movement to found a Bexhill hospital.

Yet this early attempt foundered because the actions of these public-spirited pioneers were subjected to fierce opposition from a lobby of townspeople who felt that Bexhill would never be able to support a hospital of its own.

Many believed it was foolhardy to contemplate launching an appeal fund. The idea was abandoned; but Bexhill would not let it die.

In 1926 the idea of a Bexhill hospital was dusted off and a town meeting was called. A fund was launched. The great campaign to create a

"cottage hospital" out of nothing more than public goodwill was under way.

Among those who recall those early days a lovely anecdote is treasured. The appeal committee met in the St. Leonards Road cafe owned by its treasurer Mr. Jethro Arscott. The aim was to thrash out a constitution.

For more than an hour debate swayed to and fro – should it be "Bexhill and District Hospital", "Bexhill and Sidley", "Bexhill-on-Sea" . . . ?

The appeal chairman, Admiral Charles Anson, habitually dined punctually at 7.15 p.m.

"Bexhill Hospital!" he declared – and won the engagement.

Legend has it that every other point of the proposed constitution fell into line after this broadside and the Admiral's dinner was not delayed.

With leadership of this order it is little wonder that the spirit of the hospital campaign was "full steam ahead".



Admiral Charles Anson – as first chairman of the appeal committee which built Bexhill Hospital he is its "founding father". The clock over the front entrance was erected in his memory. (Photograph from the *Bexhill Observer* of May 13, 1933).

In seven of the most financially depressed years of the 20th century the people of Bexhill raised enough money to open a fully-equipped modern hospital COMPLETELY FREE OF DEBT.

Such a target can only be achieved by total

commitment from all sections of the community and by inspired leadership.

The main building was built to the design of architects, Adams, Holden and Pearson of Knightsbridge and cost £34,000. Half a century of inflation has made the figure meaningless on its own. In terms of the contemporary purchasing power of the pound the hospital pioneers raised £1,200,000 in that short space of time.

How? They did it by leaving no stone unturned, no profitable avenue unexplored.

Whenever any aspect of Bexhill Hospital is under threat, folk with long memories recall indignantly – and not without a little justifiable pride – "We bought bricks to build our hospital".

The buy-a-brick scheme was among the most successful and most memorable of a wide variety of fund-raising ploys.

The children of the district also played a significant part. Inspired by the writings of "Uncle Peter" in the Bexhill Observer's Children Corner column, they saved their coppers. A trickle became a flood, the flood became a cascade of tiny coins.

The Bexhill Observer Farthing Fund channelled children's giving towards Bexhill Hospital for more than 30 years.

The fund-raisers had a policy. Every donation was acknowledged. Four and a half pages of benefactors and their gifts ranging from £300 to half a crown, are followed in one annual report by young Tony Dennett's hard-saved 14s for the Farthing Fund and Audrey Eldridge's 5s.

They were two out of a list that covered a page of children's gifts.

Souvenir handbooks published by the Observer's proprietors F. J. Parsons Ltd. were frequently 100 or more pages thick, bolstered by the advertisement revenue of town tradesmen anxious to play their part and to be seen to support so worthy a cause.

*...continued*

# How it was done

At a time when half a guinea would buy a good quality pair of men's flannel trousers from Wheatley Brothers, the annual hospital fair was a social occasion of such magnitude that it yielded an incredible £2,750.

The net that the hospital committee stretched out to collect the goodwill of Bexhill and turn it to practical use was a wide one. A prize distribution scheme, flag days, a hospital gift shop, The League of the Golden Penny, Mayoral Balls, jumble sales, hospital bridge and whist drives, "Pound Day", firework displays – they all played their part.

The appeal treasurer Mr. Jethro Arscott devised a "quotation calendar", a brochure in which townspeople paid to have their favourite quotations, classical, literary and homespun original, in print.

Any hospital administrator today who could keep the drug bill to the contemporary equivalent of the £142 16s 10d Bexhill Hospital spent in the eight working months between the opening ceremony and the hospital committee's first report would be a financial genius.

The figure also included the cost of chemicals and disinfectants!

The great advantage of a small local hospital under purely local control was that statistics were readily available and easily understandable. With their quick grasp of what today would be termed "good public relations", the pioneers of Bexhill Hospital turned these figures to good effect in maintaining town interest – and support – for the great new venture.

Thus the committee was able to demonstrate by the year's end the practical advantages of the hospital critics said was not needed.

They published a "summary of results". It showed that of 349 in-patients, 238 were "cured" and a further 73 "relieved". Sadly, on the debit side 20 ended their days in the care of the town's new

asset. The essential difference was that they had been within easy visiting distance of relatives and friends.

During that first eight months, 105 major operations and 129 minor ones were performed.

Patients stayed an average of 17.7 days and of an average of 36.4 beds available, 26.9 were occupied.

The true measure of the need for a local hospital can be judged by the growth in its use by 1938, the last year before war intervened.

By then 62 beds were available and with 1,070 in-patients admitted in the year the average bed occupancy was 52.1.

To keep an in-patient at Bexhill's hospital during its first months of service cost the princely sum of £3 5s 8½d a week. Of this food cost 11s 6¼d. Surgery and dispensary costs added 6s 11¾d. Salaries and wages accounted for £1 1s 7¾d.

It is significant that administration in those days when so much voluntary service was performed by townsfolk accounted for only 3s 8½d per patient per week.

The career of one local doctor spans the half century of Bexhill Hospital's service. In that time society has changed out of all recognition, the purchasing power of the pound has shrunk and medical science has undergone a revolution.

Dr. Dennis Dunnill came to Bexhill in 1929 as a young general practitioner. He became Bexhill Hospital's first anaesthetist; a post he retained until NHS retirement age.

From his arrival in Bexhill he recalls "there was a certain spirit about the need for a local hospital.

"In those days the Sackville Hotel was the centre of everything. Every single thing that was done in Bexhill in those days was done in aid of the hospital. The New Year's Eve Ball was in aid of the hospital – everything.

"Everybody was doing something to raise money for the hospital, bazaars, fetes . . .

"The whole purpose of the thing was that Bexhill people should not have to go to Hastings for treatment.

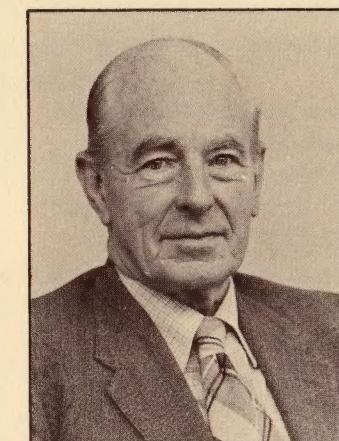
"As I remember, the hospital was completed but not opened for almost a year. They would not open it until it was free of debt. The town worked like the Dickens. Everyone was frightfully good.

"It was a lovely hospital, such a wonderfully informal attitude. Everybody loved it.

"It was regarded very highly indeed in medical circles. It was a GP hospital which was then a new idea. There were not an awful lot of them. They were just coming in.

"I think this is why the patients liked it so much. They were looked after by their own doctors. We admitted them ourselves and we looked after them.

"We had a very good band of specialists. There was never any problem. You took a case into a ward and if you were unhappy about them you could always get advice. The hospital was right on the spot. It was so easy.



Dr. Dennis Dunnill – a lifetime's work for Bexhill Hospital.

"I was in general practice and I was interested in anaesthetics. I used to give anaesthetics at the hospital until the war came along and I went into the Army. I did anaesthetics in the Army all through the war. When the National Health Service came in anyone who had done anaesthetics was allowed to continue and I went on until I was 65.

"When I left I was replaced by a whole-time anaesthetist. I had been both a GP and a part-time anaesthetist. There is no such thing today as a GP-specialist.

"People in Bexhill were brassed off with having to go to the Royal East Sussex Hospital. It is true they used to do 'day cases' there; operation in the morning and home that night. We never did – except perhaps for adenoids.

"Before the hospital was built we used to do quite a bit of minor surgery in the practice. Most doctors had gas apparatus in their surgeries.

"When the hospital opened you could say to someone 'Wait till the end of surgery' then stick them in your car and run them up to the hospital. It was easy. You popped them in the theatre and did it there and then."

For 3d a week a bread-winner could take out medical insurance for himself. Dr. Dunnill recalls that to insure a wife and family cost extra.

His career, and the hospital's history, began when a doctor had a basic range of "eight to ten" medicines, practically no tablets and no intravenous anaesthetics.

"Drugs were simple and cheap. The hospital ran free of debt. It could not do that today with the current cost of drugs and equipment."

The doctor returned to Bexhill after war service to a changed situation. The Beveridge Report had altered thinking. The NHS was on the way.

"After the war it was decided to build a maternity unit. All the plans were passed. In fact they started to set out the foundations. On the car park at the back I think it was. Then we were told to

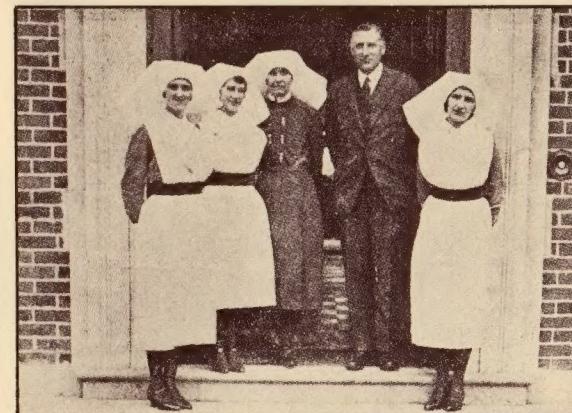
shut up. The NHS was coming.

"As far as Bexhill was concerned and its attitude to its hospital the NHS did not make all that much difference. We just went on our own sweet way except that 'they' paid for it.

"It did affect contributions and legacies because people who had been so generous said 'Why give it to the government?'

"It was not until the League of Friends came along that we began to get back that 'feeling' again, that old Bexhill attitude that 'We must do something to support the hospital . . .'"

### "We sewed and we sold bricks . . ."



Miss Margaret Dyke accepted the post as Matron of the new hospital on one condition – that she could bring with her from Holmfirth Memorial Hospital, Yorkshire, her three nursing sisters. Seen here on opening day with Matron Dyke and the vice-chairman of the hospital committee, Dr. Kenneth Stokes, are Sister Elsie Whistlecroft, Sister Florence Porter (now Mrs. Florence Clare of Sutherland Avenue) and Sister Hilda Martin (now Mrs. Hilda Waghorn of Cooden Drive).

"I was in at the start. We sold bricks to raise money for the building of the hospital. We sold them as fast as we could," Mrs. Violetta Honeysett of Mayo Lane recalls.

Mrs. Honeysett was also one of a great many Bexhill ladies who sewed for hours to equip the hospital with bed linen.



Top Left  
Former nursing sister  
Mrs. Florence Clare –  
"They were happy times".



Top Right  
Mrs. Violetta Honeysett – she  
and her friends from the  
Sewing Guild produced every  
stitch of bed linen for the  
new hospital.



Right  
Former nursing sister Mrs.  
Hilda Waghorn.

"We formed the Sewing Guild. We used to go every week and collect the sewing, take it home, work all week and then bring it back and collect some more.

"Sheets, pillowcases – the Guild made the lot ready for the opening of the hospital. It was all new material. The sheets were cut out ready and we took the stuff home and made it up.

"We carried on after the hospital opened. We got to be so many at Sidley that we formed a Sidley branch of the Guild. Then we managed to get the Sidley Institute and we went there to work.

"I did it for years. I would still do it now only I am 84 and I can't.

"We sold books of 'bricks'. They were 6d a brick. Sixpence was a good sum then. We sold them anywhere and to anyone who would buy a brick. We never stopped! We were so keen to get the hospital built.

"Bexhill people would do anything for their hospital . . ."



Opening Day at Bexhill Hospital – May 13, 1933 – combined the pomp of a state occasion with the joy and relief of a victory parade. It was a major "red letter day" for the town.

And of course it rained.

The opening ceremony was performed by Her Highness, Princess Helena Victoria, a cousin of King George V.

With the acute sense of "occasion" that marked all their public events, the voluntary hospital committee ensured that the opening ceremony had both dignity and style.

That Saturday afternoon Princess Helena left the Cooden Beach Hotel promptly at 2.30 accompanied by the Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough of Bexhill, Earl and Countess De La Warr.

The official party drove in procession along Cooden Drive, Richmond Road, West Parade, Marina, Sea Road, Old Town and Chantry Lane to the new hospital on its commanding hilltop position.

Bexhill was "en fete" despite the rain. Cheering crowds greeted the Princess. The hospital grounds were a sea of expectant faces.

A Guard of Honour provided by Bexhill's own

Earl De La Warr, Mayor of Bexhill and president of the hospital committee, invites Princess Helena Victoria to turn the key and formally declare Bexhill Hospital open – May 13, 1933.

231st (Sussex) Field Battery, Royal Artillery, the Ambulance Brigade and a detachment of Bexhill Men's Red Cross was drawn up as the official party walked to a marquee on the hospital lawn.

There the Mayor presented members of the Board of Management, the Matron, the Honorary Secretary and others to the Princess.

Earl De La Warr in a speech of welcome said:

"Today we are witnessing the culmination of many years of effort – effort made by all classes of the community in Bexhill.

"We are in the fortunate position today of being able to open this new hospital virtually free of debt.

"The reason for that is that every single section of the community has made his or her contribution.

"We received contributions of a very large order going into many pounds and we have also received a great number of shillings and pennies.

"The fact we are in this happy position today shows that we have accomplished a very hard task.

"Although we have no debt left behind, yet we have a very great effort waiting for us in the future. If we are to maintain this hospital we need all the hope and encouragement we can have."

After all the hard work and leadership he had expended as chairman of the committee which had created the hospital from nothing, Admiral Anson was robbed at the last minute of the opportunity to savour the fruits of success. Ill health prevented him from attending the opening ceremony and his place was taken by his vice chairman and eventual successor, Dr. Kenneth Stokes, who proposed the vote of thanks to Princess Helena Victoria.

Dr. Stokes spoke of the day marking the "realisation of a great ambition, that this town should be able to provide accommodation, and care for, its own sick . . .

"I believe today will be a landmark in our local history and that the opening of this hospital will prove to be a milestone on the road of Bexhill's progress and future prosperity."

"O God Our Help In Ages Past" was the choice of hymn. The Rector, Canon H. Maycock, asked for Divine Blessing on the new hospital.

All eyes were on the official party as they walked from the marquee to the steps in front of the hospital's elegant front entrance.

The eyes included those of the national press for the town's achievement was sufficiently newsworthy to warrant a page of pictures in such papers as the *Sunday Pictorial* and the *Daily Mirror* with more sober accounts in the quality papers.



Their reports tell of the guards of honour drawn from the ranks of Bexhill's Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, the rows of nursing staff in their new and stiffly starched uniforms; the local detachment of Red Cross nurses, the District Nurses and "the School Nurse".

Representatives of the architects Adams, Holden and Pearson, representing the late Mr. Percy Adams and of building contractors Messrs. G. H. Denne of Deal were presented to the Princess.

Finally the great moment had arrived.

Her Highness turned the key and unlocked the door to the future health care of the town.

The Great Hope had become reality. The hospital which doubters and critics so many years before had said little Bexhill would never be able to build on its own, stood open and ready to receive its first patients.

BEXHILL-ON-SEA OBSERVER, SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1932

## PRINCESS OPENS BEXHILL'S HOSPITAL

A WONDERFUL ACHIEVEMENT.  
EVERYTHING PAID FOR.  
AND IN PURSE.

The newspaper spread includes several black and white photographs. Top left: A wide shot of a large crowd gathered in front of a long, two-story hospital building. Top right: A group of people, identified as the Princess and her party, standing near a building. Middle left: A close-up of a woman in a dark coat and hat, possibly the Princess, looking towards the camera. Middle right: A group of people, including a man in a suit and a woman in a white dress, walking together. Bottom left: A group of Girl Guides in uniform. Bottom right: A large crowd of people gathered in a field or open area. The text around the photos describes the event as a "WONDERFUL ACHIEVEMENT" where "EVERYTHING PAID FOR" and "AND IN PURSE". Other captions include "ARRIVAL OF PRINCESS HELENA AT THE GROUNDS", "WAITING FOR ADMIRALTY TO VIEW THE MEDICAL STAFF", "TOP PRINCESS RECEIVING MARCH SPEECHES FROM TERRITORIAL BRIGADES", "THE ARRIVAL WITH THE MAYOR OF MR. J. W. WALKER AND THE DEPUTY MAYOR, MR. HENRY JACKMAN", and "TO THE GIRL GUIDES, CHIEF OF HONOUR GOES A BIG WELCOME ON THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRINCESS".

The *Bexhill Observer's* own celebration of hospital opening day.

Red Cross nurses line the route as the Mayor accompanies Princess Helena Victoria up the path to the hospital for the opening ceremony.

# The "Veritable Sun-Trap"



Those who visualise hospitals as places of gloom and suffering will be pleasantly surprised when they have the opportunity this week-end of inspecting Bexhill's own temple of healing in its finished state" wrote the *Bexhill Observer* immediately before the opening.

"The furnishing throughout is most cheerful and attractive. The beds in the general wards are each provided with a locker and all have an overhead reading lamp.

"There are two armchairs for convalescent patients as well as an invalid chair in each ward.

"At the southern end of the general wards are verandahs on which patients can sit in sunny weather.

"The cosiness of the private wards is a striking feature. All are fitted with hand basins with hot water and green, which is the prevailing note in the colour scheme, even extends to the blankets on the beds.

"The children's ward is furnished on nursery lines and covers for the cots have animals appliqued on them."

Bexhill Hospital has a unique link with Her Majesty the Queen. The inaugural meeting was held on the day she was born, April 21, 1926.



Borough Mayor Alderman Bill Bowrey pays a post-war Christmas morning bedside visit watched by founder treasurer Mr. Jethro Arscott. The family link with Bexhill Hospital is maintained today. Mr. Arscott's son, also Jethro, for ten years chairman of the League of Friends, is currently its president.

The children's ward was named The Princess Elizabeth Ward, by gracious permission of the Duchess of York (now Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother).

The cost of furnishing it was met by subscriptions, donations and the proceeds of entertainments put on by girls' public schools in the town.

"The hospital is a two storey brick building facing directly south. It consists of a large central block and two wings in which the general wards are accommodated.

"Standing on an eminence, it commands a splendid view of undulating country extending as far as Beachy Head in the west.

"It has been well described as a veritable sun trap . . ." said the *Observer*.

# Only the Best will do

For "The greatest voluntary effort in the history of the town" as it was described at the time, only the best quality equipment was considered satisfactory.

"All classes have contributed their quota to the building fund which has benefitted from farthings collected by children as well as by many generous donations from wealthy supporters," said the *Bexhill Observer*.

From a short-list of three sites, Holliers Hill was selected in 1928 on the advice of Mr. Percy Adams "an architect with a unique experience in designing and building hospitals."

Adams, Holden and Pearson were appointed as architects and instructed to draw up plans for a hospital with accommodation for 45 patients in four general wards of eight beds each, a children's ward, seven private wards, an operating theatre, nurses quarters and "the usual offices".

G. H. Denne and Son Ltd., of Deal won the building contract against opposition from a dozen other tenderers. The land and the building cost £30,895. The equipment cost another £4,000.

For a start only one men's ward and one women's ward together with the children's ward and seven private wards were opened. One of the upstairs wards was arranged to take four or five semi-private patients or eight general patients. The other ward was used as a dormitory for staff.

The operating theatre was equipped with "one of the latest tables made by Thackray of Leeds and the most up-to-date type of shadowless lamp".

The cost of the lamp was met by money subscribed and raised by boys' private schools in the town. An emergency device "which automatically comes into use in the event of any failure in the main supply of electric light" enabled operations to continue for up to three hours "thus enabling any operation to be completed".

The anaesthetic room was said to be one of the most completely equipped on the South Coast. It was given by Mr. and Mrs. William Cuthbert, later to serve the borough as mayor and mayoress.

The X-ray unit was donated by Councillor Wimshurst. Other equipment was bought by a fund collected by friends in memory of Dr. Sydney Kent.

Said the *Observer* "The hospital will not lack for the solace and entertainment which the wireless brings to those who are sick. The installation is the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Challis and there are headphones at every bedside.

"The kitchen is situated on the first floor. The walls are covered with white glazed tiles which enhance its spick and span appearance and it embodies all the latest ideas for the preparation of invalid and other cooking including two gas ovens and the means for keeping the food hot while it is waiting to be served."

Of the officers of the town campaign and their conspicuous success the *Observer* commented: "Their leadership has been an inspiration which has called forth the most whole-hearted and self-sacrificing co-operation of their colleagues in their great task of giving the town its own centre for the relief of suffering and the nursing back to health of bruised and broken humanity."

## Progress

Even before the hospital was opened the pioneers were looking ahead to the next step. They planned a nurses' home with accommodation overlooking the hospital's sweeping lawns.

The house committee's forward thinking was as accurate as ever. Within a few months of its opening, the hospital was being fully used. The early critics who claimed the scheme was too grandiose

for Bexhill were confounded.

Once again the mighty fund-raising machine was put into operation.

By October 9, 1934 statesman and eminent surgeon Lord Moynihan of Leeds was able to declare the nurses' home open by turning a silver key in the front door lock.

The home had cost £5,700 of which £4,100 was in hand. It provided 31 bedrooms, three sitting rooms and "reserve accommodation for future needs".

By July 1, 1938 the third stage in the planned development of the voluntary hospital was achieved.

Mrs. Walter Elliot, making her first public appearance as wife of the new Minister of Health, performed the opening ceremony of the new out-patients department.

In all a further £17,000 had been invested by the town in building and equipping the department with its own casualty theatre, consulting rooms, waiting rooms, and treatment rooms.

The design was the work of Bexhill architect Mr. J. E. Maynard and was built by local contractor Mr. Tom Wallis.

Hospital committee chairman Mrs. Christina Meads said the out-patients department had been made possible by two large legacies plus the generosity of the people of Bexhill who, once again, had dipped into their pockets in response to the needs of the hospital.

"It has been increasingly recognised that one of the greatest drawbacks to Bexhill patients recommended for special out-patient treatment was having to expend time and energy, as well as money, on travelling to and from Hastings," Mrs. Meads explained.

## The League fills the Gap

The spirit of voluntary service in Bexhill which had built the town its hospital did not die with the birth of the National Health Service. Rather, it retired gracefully into the background for five years to judge what the needs of the infant might be.

In April 1952 the Mayor of the borough, Councillor Gilbert Goodwin, called a public meeting to found a League of Friends of the hospital.

Little did the townsfolk attending that meeting realise that the organisation they were founding would grow so much that once again there would be an outlet for Bexhill's affection and concern for its hospital – even though it was now owned and administered by the State.

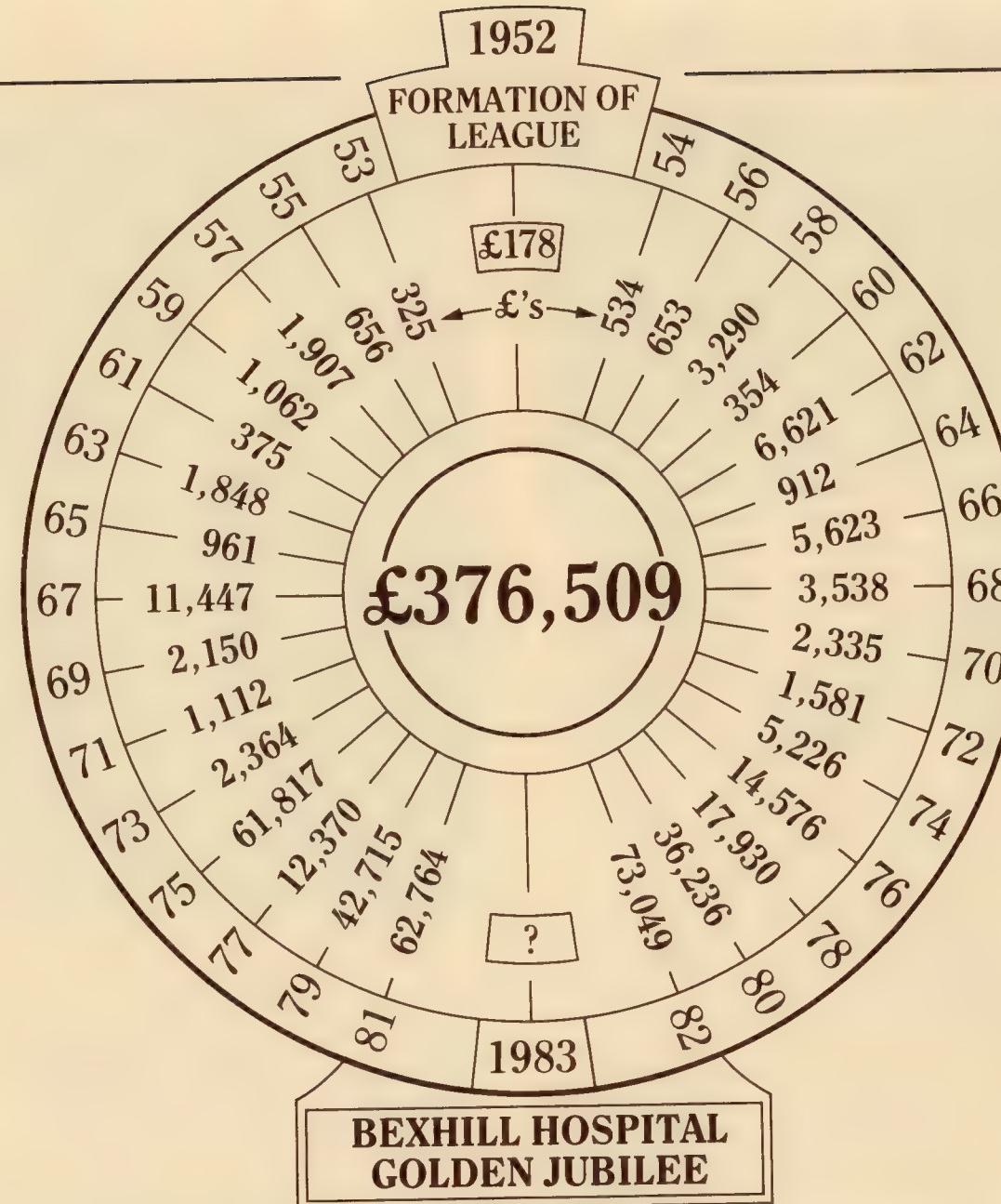
The relationship between the NHS and the volunteers was set out at that meeting by Colonel Brooke, chairman of the new NHS Hospital House Committee. It was to support the work of the hospital.

The meeting elected a special committee to draw up a constitution. The objectives were to foster and maintain public interest in the work of the hospital and to raise funds for supplementing the resources of the hospital service and to provide amenities for patients and staff.

The constitution was adopted in May 1952.

The League took on the challenge under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Birkmyre. The fledgling group set out to enrol as many members as possible at an annual subscription of 2s 6d. By the end of 1952, 400 townspeople had been enrolled.

The League had made the first tiny step in what was to prove an astonishing record of generosity towards the hospital which would confirm its supporters as worthy successors to the pioneers of 20 years before.



THIRTY YEARS PROVIDING IMPROVEMENTS & AMENITIES

# 50th Anniversary Programme

This special programme of events is intended as a welcome guide for the general public without whose support and enthusiasm Bexhill Hospital would not have been built and without whose continuing generosity it would today be much the poorer.

**Bexhill Hospital Golden Jubilee Thanksgiving Service**, Friday, May 13, 1983 to be conducted in the Parish Church of St. Peter by the Chaplain of Bexhill Hospital, the Rev. David Godwin, 11 a.m.

The service is organised jointly by Hastings Health Authority and the League of Friends of Bexhill Hospital and will be attended by officers of the authority, members of the hospital staff and officers and members of the League of Friends.

The guest of honour will be the Right Honourable, The Earl De La Warr whose late father, The Ninth Earl as Mayor of the Borough of Bexhill, took part in the hospital opening ceremony performed on May 13, 1933 by Princess Helena Victoria.

A special commemorative exhibition marking the work of Bexhill Hospital and its staff from 1933-1983 will be open to the public daily at Bexhill Hospital from Friday, May 13 for a week.

The exhibition of uniforms, documents, photographs and equipment has been arranged jointly by Hastings Health Authority and by the League of Friends of Bexhill Hospital.

The exhibition will be open free of charge from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

**The Golden Jubilee Hospital Garden Party** organised by the League of Friends of the Bexhill Hospital will be opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Sussex, the Most Honourable, The Marquis of Abergavenny, 2 p.m., Saturday July 9, 1983 on the Hospital lawn.

Nobody could accuse the League of Friends of Bexhill Hospital of raising cash for the hospital and then standing aloof from the personal needs of the patients it seeks to serve.

Members help:

- By running a regular nightly mobile telephone service round the hospital wards.
- By manning five days a week "shop" in the geriatric unit so that old folk can buy sweets, stationery and other needs on the premises.
- By manning a canteen for out-patients, visitors, car service drivers and staff five days a week.

The League hopes to mark Golden Jubilee Year with a start being made on the much-needed improvement scheme to the out-patient department. It has £60,000 set aside for the first phase. Now it hopes to finance a second phase.

There is much work to be done by the League of which raising cash is but one important part. Volunteers are constantly needed to help with delivering League newsletters; running the shop in the geriatric unit; manning the mobile ward telephone or lending a hand on garden party day – the high spot of the League year and a major source of funds.

Membership of the League of Friends stands at 2,000. Can we make Golden Jubilee year worthy of our glorious tradition?

Will YOU join the League and help push our membership past the 3,000 mark?

The generosity of the people of Bexhill has enabled the outstanding sum of £376,509 to be spent by the League of Friends over a period of thirty years. It has involved some six hundred items, all of which have been considered by the general committee of the League under the heading of "hospital requests"; a permanent feature on the agenda.

In the early years, the League bought mundane items – chairs, stools, heaters and the like.

With the continued development of technology and medicine it rose to new challenges.

1957/8	Modernisation of operating theatre	£3,423
1962/3	Hospital hall	£6,853
1965/6	Out-patients dept. – new equipment	£4,798
1967	Modernisation of hospital kitchen	£7,051
1975	Provision of all furniture and equipment for the new geriatric unit	£37,000
	Furnishing staff quarters	£3,000
	Day Nursery at hospital	£18,854
	Adjustable King's Fund beds	£4,545
1976	New pharmacy	£4,700
	Adjustable King's Fund beds	£2,872
1978	Specialised apparatus required for consultants	£3,825
	Mini-bus for disabled	£8,589
1979	X-Ray image intensifier	£21,644
	Medicus air-bed	£3,525
	Part cost re-roofing nurses' hall	£5,000
1980	Ward B upgrading improvements	£12,769
	X-Ray image intensifier extras	£1,041
	New operating theatre lamp	£3,026
	X-Ray G.E.C. monitor, video cassettes and remote controls	£1,943
1981	Ward A upgrading	£18,637
	Nurses' Home beds and furniture	£5,382
	Specialist apparatus	£16,505
	Provision of colonoscope etc.	£5,289
1982	Wards C and D upgrading	£38,342
	Medicus air-bed	£3,750
	Hitachi ultra sonic scanner	£19,193
	Bedside lockers	£4,855
	Specialised King's Fund beds	£3,859

## OTHER HOSPITAL SERVICES

Requests from other leagues from time to time for assistance in the purchase of special items.

£25,000

The first 50 years are only the start of the story of Bexhill Hospital. Its role is typified here by scenes illustrating the sterling work done by the Department of Medicine for the Elderly in helping patients back to a full life.

The support the hospital receives from the League of Friends is demonstrated by the gift of a £19,193 ultra sound scanner handed over by president Mr. Jethro Arscott and chairman Mr. John French to consultant gynaecologist Dr. Aly Alaily.





